

I CLAIM AS MY INVENTION:

1. A method for supplying a patient with medication, comprising the steps of:

- (a) communicating a designation to a data bank representing a quantity and a dosage of a medication;
- (b) at said data bank, calculating, based on said designation, a point in time at which said medication will be used up; and
- (c) prior to said point in time, establishing a contact from said data bank to an entity selected from the group consisting of said patient, a caregiver for said patient, and a caregiving establishment for said patient, to allow replenished medication to be available to said patient no later than said point in time.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1 comprising operating said data bank by a service vendor.

3. A method as claimed in claim 1 comprising the additional steps of prescribing said medication by a physician at a physician's practice, and automatically establishing a contact from said physician's practice to said data bank at a time of said prescription to inform the data bank of the physician responsible for prescribing said medication.

4. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein step (c) includes setting up an appointment with said physician prior to said point in time.

5. A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein said data bank automatically sets up said physician's appointment dependent on said point in time.

6. A method as claimed in claim 5 wherein said physician has an electronic appointment calendar, and wherein the step of automatically setting up said physician's appointment comprises automatically establishing a contact from said data bank to said electronic appointment calendar to set up said physician's appointment dependent on information stored in said electronic appointment calendar.

7. A method as claimed in claim 5 wherein said patient has a time span wherein said patient is unable to participate in said physician's appointment, and wherein said data bank takes said time into account in setting up said physician's appointment.

8. A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein said data bank automatically informs said entity of said physician's appointment.

9. A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein confirmation of said physician's appointment is required at said data bank.

10. A method as claimed in claim 1 comprising the additional steps of storing information in said data bank identifying a physician responsible for prescribing said medication, and automatically informing said physician from said data bank if

replenishment of said medication cannot be made available to said patient before said point in time.

11. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said medication is a first medication, and wherein step (a) comprises communicating a designation representing a quantity and a dosage of a second medication to said data bank, in addition to said designation representing a quantity and a dosage of said first medication, and wherein step (b) comprises calculating, at said data bank, a point in time at which said second medication will be used up in addition to said point in time at which said first medication will be used up, and wherein step (c) comprises establishing said contact from said data bank to said entity before an earliest of said point in time at which said first medication will be used up and said point in time at which said second medication will be used up.

12. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein step (a) comprises communication a designation of an amount and a usage of a medical utensil, associated with administration of said medication, to said data bank together with said designation representing a quantity and a dosage of said medication, and wherein step (b) comprises calculating, at said data bank, a point in time at which said medical utensil will be used up in addition to said point in time at which said medication will be used up, and wherein step (c) comprises establishing said contact from said data bank to said entity before an earliest of said point in time at which said medication will be used up and said point in time at which said medical utensil will be used up.

13. A medical system for supplying a patient with medication, comprising:
a data bank to which a designation representing a quantity and a dosage of a medication is communicated;
a calculator at said data bank which calculates, based on said designation, a point in time at which said medication will be used up; and
prior to said point in time, said data bank establishing a contact from said data bank to an entity selected from the group consisting of said patient, a caregiver for said patient, and a caregiving establishment for said patient, to allow replenished medication to be available to said patient no later than said point in time.

14. A medical system as claimed in claim 13 wherein said data bank is operated by a service vendor.

15. A medical system as claimed in claim 13 wherein said medication is prescribed by a physician at a physician's practice, and further comprising a unit at said physician's practice of automatically establishing a contact from said physician's practice to said data bank at a time of said prescription to inform said data bank of the physician responsible for prescribing said medication.

16. A medical system as claimed in claim 15 wherein said data bank initiates setting up an appointment with said physician prior to said point in time.

17. A medical system as claimed in claim 16 wherein said data bank automatically sets up said physician's appointment dependent on said point in time.

18. A medical system as claimed in claim 17 wherein said physician has an electronic appointment calendar, and wherein said data bank automatically establishes a contact from said data bank to said electronic appointment calendar to set up said physician's appointment dependent on information stored in said electronic appointment calendar.

19. A medical system as claimed in claim 17 wherein said patient has a time span wherein said patient is unable to participate in said physician's appointment, and wherein said data bank takes said time into account in setting up said physician's appointment.

20. A medical system as claimed in claim 16 wherein said data bank automatically informs said entity of said physician's appointment.

21. A medical system as claimed in claim 16 wherein said data bank requires confirmation of said physician's appointment.

22. A medical system as claimed in claim 13 wherein said data bank contains information identifying a physician responsible for prescribing said medication, and wherein said data bank automatically informs said physician replenishment of said medication cannot be made available to said patient before said point in time.

23. A medical system as claimed in claim 13 wherein said medication is a first medication, and wherein a designation representing a quantity and a dosage of a second medication is communicated to said data bank, in addition to said designation representing a quantity and a dosage of said first medication, and wherein said calculator at said data bank calculates a point in time at which said second medication will be used up in addition to said point in time at which said first medication will be used up, and wherein said data bank establishes said contact from said data bank to said entity before an earliest of said point in time at which said first medication will be used up and said point in time at which said second medication will be used up.

24. A medical system as claimed in claim 13 wherein a designation of an amount and a usage of a medical utensil, associated with administration of said medication, is communicated to said data bank together with said designation representing a quantity and a dosage of said medication, and wherein said calculator at said data bank calculates a point in time at which said medical utensil will be used up in addition to said point in time at which said medication will be used up, and wherein said data bank establishes said contact from said data bank to said entity before an earliest of said point in time at which said medication will be used up and said point in time at which said medical utensil will be used up.